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Senate revokes endorsement of casino compact with Gun Lake Band of Pottawatomi

Sen. Sikkema moves to cancel unsigned compact that is at odds with the people's support of Proposal 1 and could lead to job loss in state

LANSING – The state Senate today revoked its previous endorsement of a tribal-state gaming compact between the state of Michigan and the Gun Lake Band of the Pottawatomi Indians, as well as its recommendation that the governor sign the compact.

Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema introduced the resolution today, noting that three key factors led to his decision.

"This compact has not been signed by a governor, an economic study was done that shows a negative economic impact and the voters overwhelmingly voted to curtail the expansion of gambling," said Sikkema, R-Wyoming. "These are three new factors that have come into play since we originally endorsed the compact and they need to be taken into consideration."

The Gun Lake Band of Pottawatomi is proposing a casino in Allegan County's Wayland Township.

The compact was endorsed by the House and Senate in December 2002, but neither Govs. Engler nor Granholm have signed it.

Sikkema's resolution notes that the casino gaming industry has experienced unexpected growth and proliferation in recent years, which is at odds with the intention of voters stated through adoption of Proposal 1.

In addition, the resolution notes that an economic analysis prepared for the Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce forecasted a negative economic impact to the state through displaced job providers and a net loss of approximately 3,000 jobs.

"At a time when Michigan's economic recovery is lagging far behind every other state, it doesn't make sense for the state to go ahead with a deal that could lead to more lost jobs," Sikkema said.